

Art Therapy Online: ATOL

ATOL Issue 3 Editorial

One of the main and unique goals of ATOL is to draw on the resources of professionals working around the world in order to provide a forum in which the international development of the visual arts in therapy can be represented. This includes extensive use of imagery, video and film. In this spirit, this issue offers a rich and diverse selection of different approaches to using art therapy, in several countries and in a variety of media.

Contributions from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand outline the history and development of the profession in those countries. These papers describe how, whilst largely grounded in British-based theory and practice, as well as influenced by American art therapists, the profession has had to adapt in culturally sensitive ways to the vicissitudes of local demands and conditions. Jill Westwood and Sheridan Linnell in Australia and Maureen Woodcock in New Zealand describe the development of art therapy practice within a post-colonial context. Hayley Berman describes the emergence of art therapy counselling as a response to the particular conditions in post-apartheid South Africa.

We are delighted to include two videos alongside these papers. 'Safe Spaces, Witness to Violence', is a documentary, written and directed by Graham Young, produced by art therapist Michelle Atlas and Graham Young. It presents art therapy as an instrument for socio-political education and change in an environment affected by the trauma resulting from violence and displacement. A video 'Where knowing and not knowing touch' made by, Jill Westwood, Sheridan Linnell, Josephine Pretorius and Suzanne Perry, staff at the University of Western Sydney. The video was made as part of an exhibition and embodies part of an on-going project that generates space for researching relationships – between artist and audience, aesthetics and (inter)subjectivity, the psychic and the social - inviting audience participation and collaboration through art-based responses to the work.

The theme of contributions of art therapy educators is continued in the inclusion of images from an exhibition by the collective of staff from Goldsmiths, University of London, who are both artists and art therapy educators. The exhibition titled 'a group unconscious' was part of the 15th Symposium in Group Analysis, held at Goldsmiths, London in August 2011. The exhibition explored the question 'What do we mean by the unconscious' through images and art forms. Tackling this through

visual shape and form with limited verbal explanation leaves the viewer to make sense of this through the subjective experience of looking and seeing.

In a similar vein, Terry Molloy's visual essay 'That's How the Light gets In' enables visual representation of his ideas through this medium that requires few words. In a further submission, through a series of prints, the artist tells his story through the subtle changes in the work over time again with only a short narrative for explanation. This raises questions about how these different images and media are 'seen' by viewers and readers because the format of the Online journal is ideally suited for posing central questions around the subjective experience of 'seeing' and 'understanding'.

A new theme that we are developing as an on-going series, is the Art Therapy Studio Project, which aims to provide both visual and verbal explanation of the different spaces used by art therapists around the world, and how these impact on thinking and practice. Dave Edwards offers an introduction to the Series and some insight into how important the work space is for art therapists. The contributors for this issue are Barrie Damarell, Debbie Michaels, Jo Garber, and Nick Stein. Further examples will be added in future issues.

The two main theoretical papers are by UK authors. David Maclagan's paper 'Between Art and Therapy: using pictures from the world of art as an imaginal focus' links with the paper by Heather Tuffery 'Are you looking at me? The reciprocal gaze and Art Psychotherapy', in which she explores the nature of the reciprocal gaze between mother and baby and its relationship to looking at art. Both offer some alternative and interesting ways of thinking about aesthetics, working in groups and the importance of the reciprocal gaze in relating, looking, seeing and understanding.

We continue to encourage all of our readers to submit to the journal which is now building into a truly international forum for discussion on art therapy, art and use of many diverse art forms that are linked to working with in a therapeutic milieu.

Information for submissions and guidelines for authors can be found at:

<http://eprints-gojo.gold.ac.uk/atol/contact.html>. All submissions must be made via the website: <http://eprints-gojo.gold.ac.uk/atol/home.html>. After this a member of the editorial board will be in contact to progress your submission through the editorial process.

We look forward to receiving your submissions to ATOL and also your views and thoughts about the journal.

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On behalf of ATOL Editorial Board.